

# Seattle Human Rights Commission

## Meeting Minutes

Thursday, March 7, 2013, 6:00–8:00 p.m.  
City Hall - Boards and Commissions Room

**Commissioners Present:** Jessica Andrade, Katherine Beckett, Isabel Bussarakum, Nika Dahlbacka, Michael Mitchell, Catherine Moore, Marty Penner, Greg Ramirez, Christopher Stearns, Christina Ygon, Jennifer Yogi

**Commissioners by Phone:** David Lujano, Marsha Mavunkel

**Commissioners Absent:** Andrea Negrete,

**SOCR Staff Present:** Michael Chin, Ronald Ramp

**Guests:** Wes Gonzales, Intern with Bruce Harrell's office

**Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:10PM

**SOCR report:** Mike Chin

Mike advised two investigators have been hired, and will be joining SOCR soon. Mike discussed an audit being conducted by the cities auditor's office. The audit is focused on the Enforcement Team. The audit primarily steamed from complaints by the business community that SOCR was not impartial in their investigations. The audit is expected to be completed by end of June to early July.

### **Committee Reports:**

#### **Executive:**

- Violence Against Women Act - Re-Authorization– Signed by Obama; SWC had rally
- Community Police Commissioners – An upcoming hearing for 15 commissioner nominees. Not a vote at this point. The vote will happen later.  
The SHRC recommendations for the Community Police Commission: (1) Independence, (2) Adequate staffing, (3) Access to public disclosure documents, but without going through regular process, (4) accountability programmed into the data collection.
- Assault Weapons Ban – Dead at this point; nothing new

**Secure Communities:**

Andrea is not in attendance. Catherine advised that King County is limiting the release of names to ICE. Only names of those convicted of certain crimes will be released. King County will not report arrests to ICE.

**Annual Report:**

Nothing to report at this time.

**Death Penalty:**

Some commissioners attended a hearing in Olympia in support of ending the death penalty in Washington State. Support is mostly symbolic at this point. May see more movement next year. The commission discussed joining with other cities in Washington in this effort. Some see Seattle as very liberal. Support of other cities may help build wider support than Seattle would alone. The commission considered a letter to Mayor or Council. It was decided not to write a letter at this point. The commission will consider more action on this if a pending execution arises this year.

**Father Solalinde visit**

A full day recognition event with Father Solalinde will take place at City Hall.

**MOTION: To issue a Resolution in recognition of Father Solalinde. ACTION: PASSED**

**Appeals**

Going well

**Law and Policy Analysis**

The commission discussed the criminal background check ordinance for employment. A compromise was reached. Employers can conduct a background check before the second interview. The initial proposal was after a job offer. Employers can still consider arrest and conviction records; if the potential employer can show a legitimate business reason for the consideration. Some commissioner expressed concerns the ordinance was not supportive enough of applicants with records. It was discussed it is an improvement over current policy. It was pointed out employers will not be able to do blanket exclusions in advertising or recruiting. Employers cannot conduct background check until later in the hiring process. Employers will be able to state that a background check might be conducted at some point in the hiring processes.

**Action item: A copy of the bill will be distributed to the commission**

**50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration**

The commission discussed moving this to late summer or early fall. It was suggested to combine this with the annual Human Rights Day. Some felt this would work. Some on the commission felt the idea of this celebration was to be a stand alone milestone event. The commission will take action on this at the next meeting.

**Approval of Minutes:**

February, 2013 minutes were approved as read

**Police Accountability**

Chris Stearns testified at council about SPD cameras, drones, and surveillance in general. There was a general sentiment that council needs to approve any new surveillance in the city. Some commissioner expressed concerns about the vague language in the SPD accountability agreement. Replace the words may, and periodic with language that clearly articulates expectations. The agreement needs to improve accountability.

The commission raised an issue with SPD cameras. SPD related an instance when SPD squad car cameras were not enabled for the first three hours of the shift. The reason given was that the officers had to immediately respond to calls, and did not have time to log on at the start of shift. The commission would like a clearer picture of how this technology works.

**Action item; Isabelle will follow up on the camera log in issue and report back to the Commission.**

**MOTION: To issue a Resolution supporting a ban on city investments in gun companies. ACTION: PASSED**

**Adjourned at 8:10 p.m.**